



November 11, 2016
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To the Venerable Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and especially Veterans of our United States and Canadian Armed Forces of the Orthodox Church in America:

Today, together with the entire nation, we honor our brothers and sisters who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States and Canada, and specifically those Orthodox Chaplains who have ministered and minister to our service members. Veterans Day offers us the opportunity to pay tribute to the men and women of our nations' military whose sacrificial service protects, preserves, and promotes peace both at home and throughout the world. The veterans of our nations are our fellow citizens whose loyalty and dedication epitomizes Christ's message of the Good Samaritan, who willingly came to the aid of his neighbor.

We are reminded today that our fellow citizens -- mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, brothers, sisters, spouses, neighbors and friends -- who have served our nations in the Armed Forces are deserving of our respect and honor. And more than anything they are deserving of our gratitude. Here I am reminded of the words of Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann who in his final sermon said, "Thank You, O Lord, for having given us this country where we are free to worship You." I would add today, "Thank you, O Lord, for the men and women who have sacrificed in service to You and our country so that we may worship You and proclaim Your message free of persecution or distress."

Brothers and sisters in Christ, please take a moment today to honor our nations' veterans and to pray for the souls of those men and women who have given their lives in service to our country, in service to their neighbors and for the cause of peace throughout the world. Each of them is known by our Lord. May we continue to keep their memories known here on earth.

Yours in Christ,

+TIKHON
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada